STUMPTOWN™

GREG RUCKA • JUSTIN GREENWOOD • RYAN HILL

The Case of the King of Clubs

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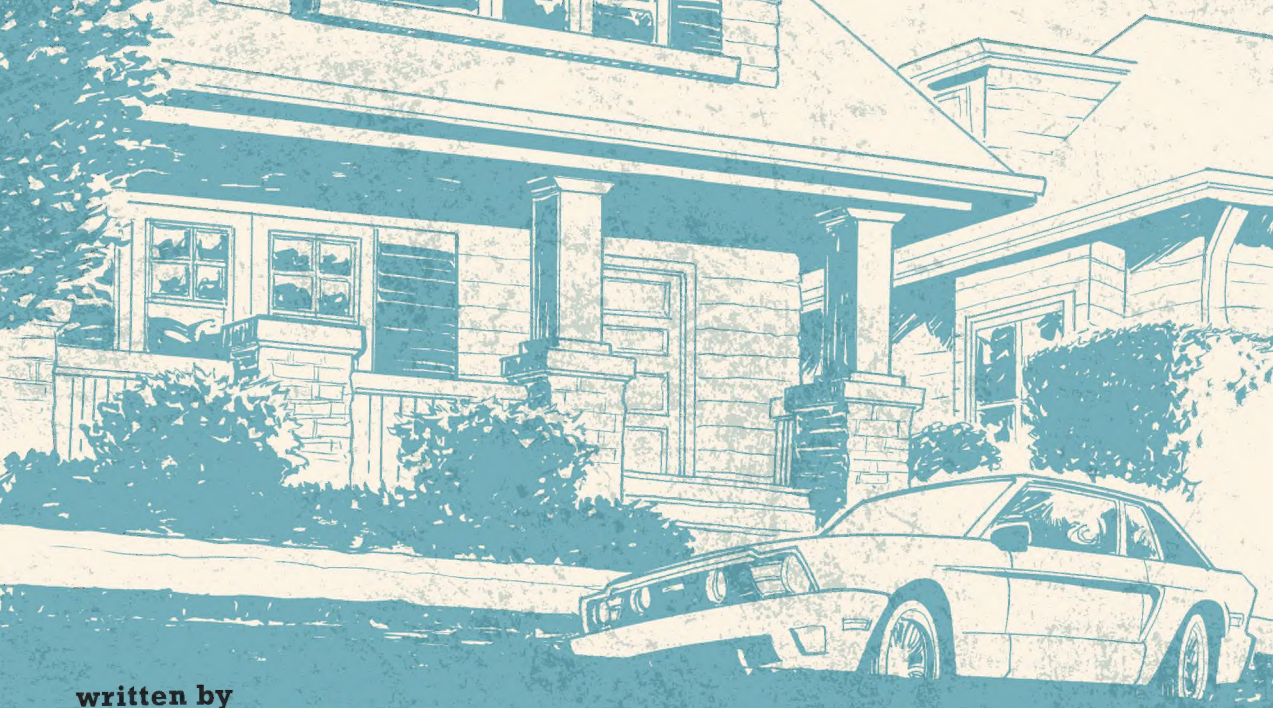

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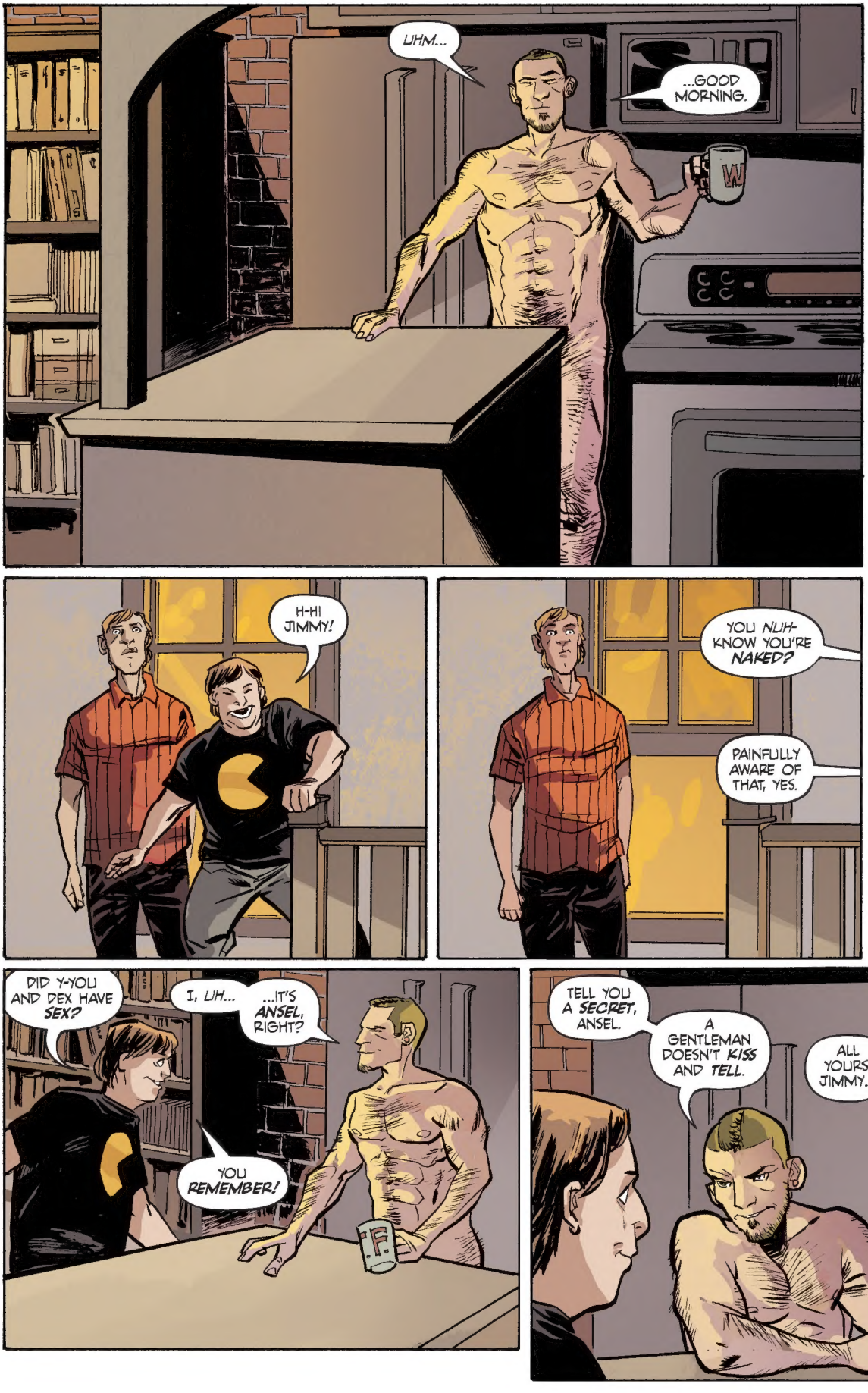
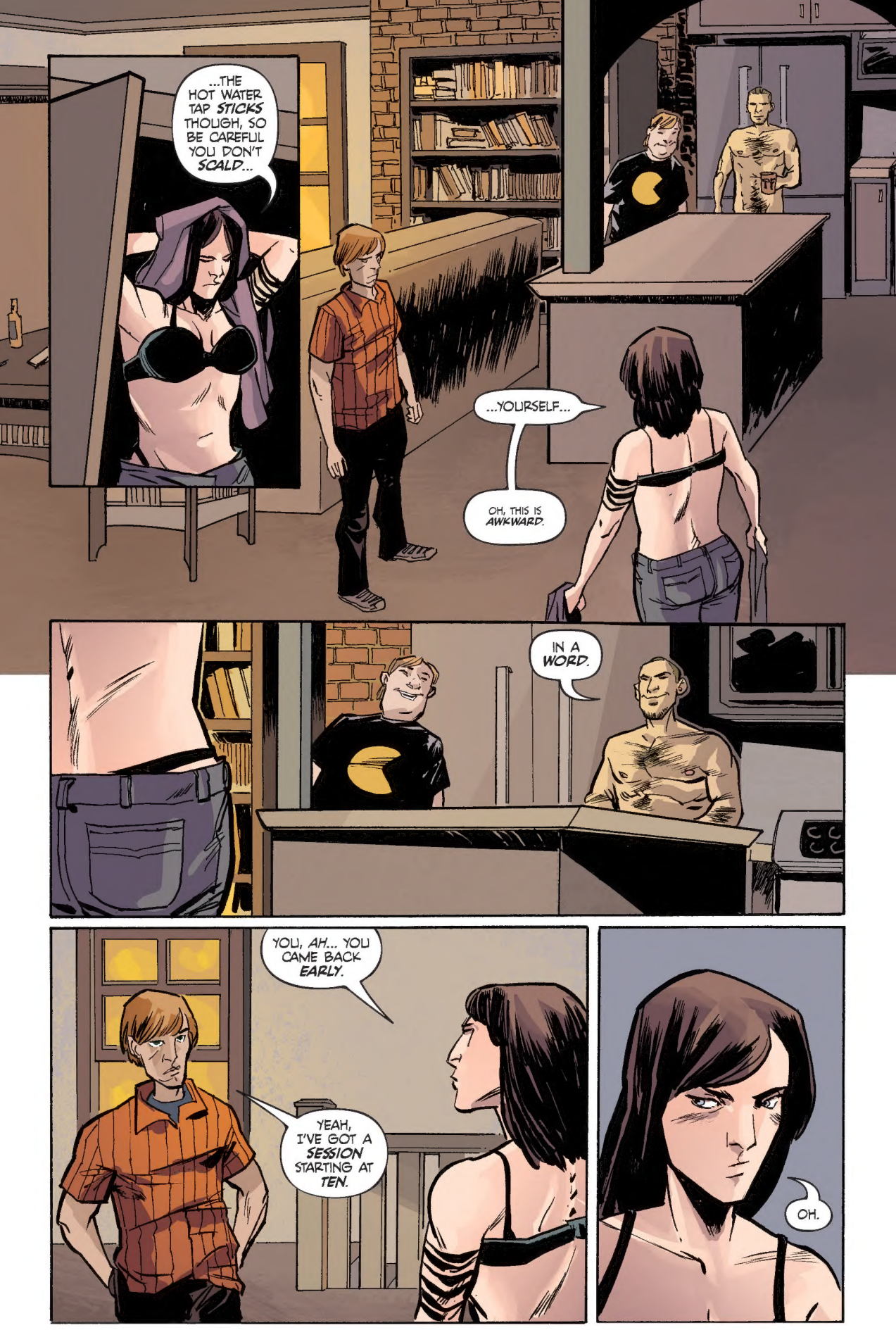
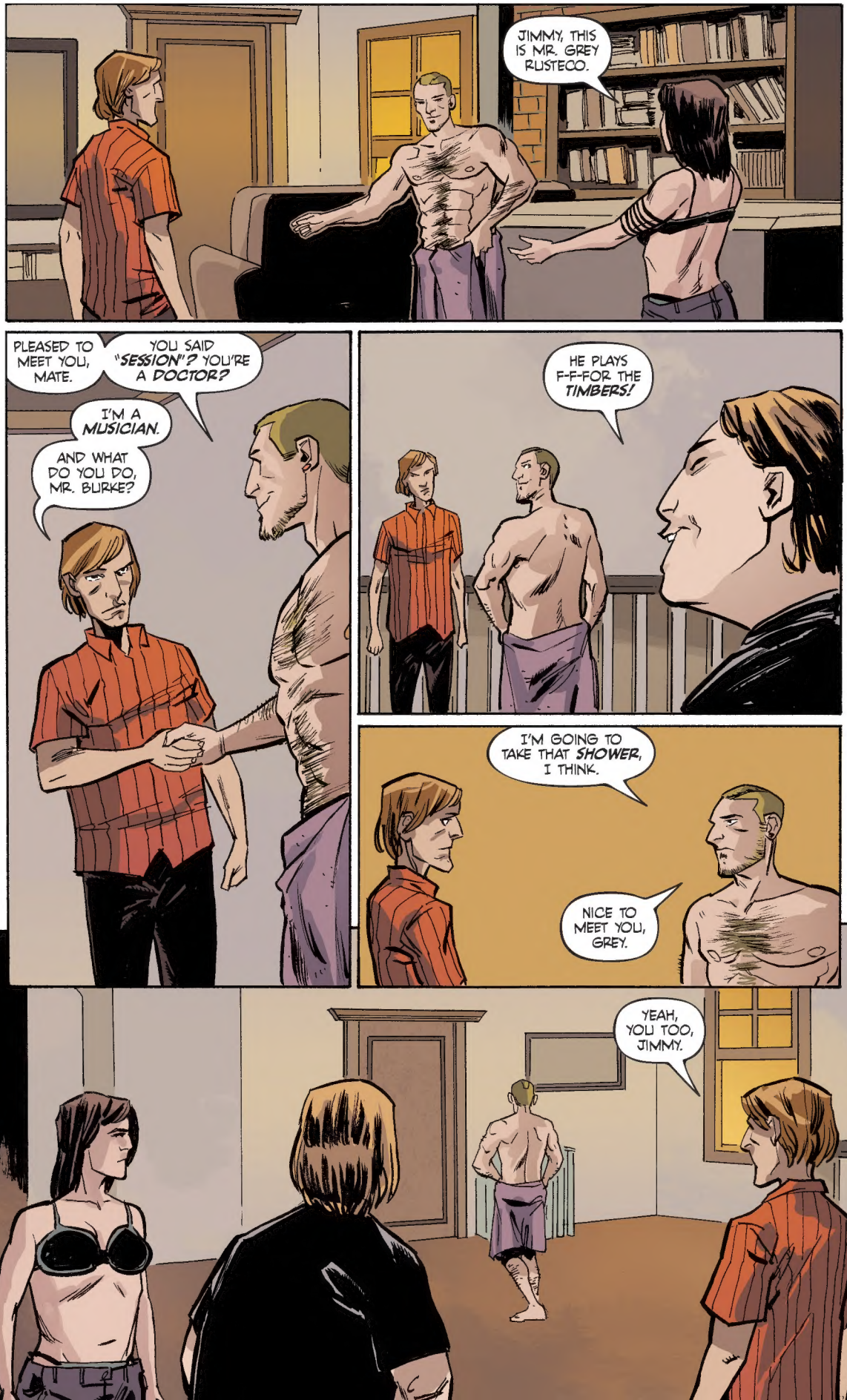
YOU'RE CRAZY, MAN.
NUH-NUH-UH!
UH-HUH!
LOOK, MAN, HERMIONE GRANGER CAN USE MAGIC. IT'S JUST NO CONTEST!
BUT SHE H-HAS THE FORCE!
A-AND THAT'S BETTER.
THE FORCE IS NOT BETTER THAN MAGIC, ANSEL!
SHE HAS A LIGHTSABER, G-GREY! A LIGHTSABER!
WE DON'T KNOW THAT!
E.U. STUFF DOESN'T COUNT ANYMORE, SO THERE'S NO REASON TO BELIEVE...
...LEIA EVER BECOMES A JEDI...


UHM...
...GOOD MORNING.
H-HI JIMMY!
YOU NUH-KNOW YOU'RE NAKED?
PAINFULLY AWARE OF THAT, YES.
DID Y-YOU AND DEX HAVE SEX?
I, UH...
...IT'S ANSEL, RIGHT?
YOU REMEMBER!
TELL YOU A SECRET, ANSEL.
A GENTLEMAN DOESN'T KISS AND TELL.
ALL YOURS, JIMMY...

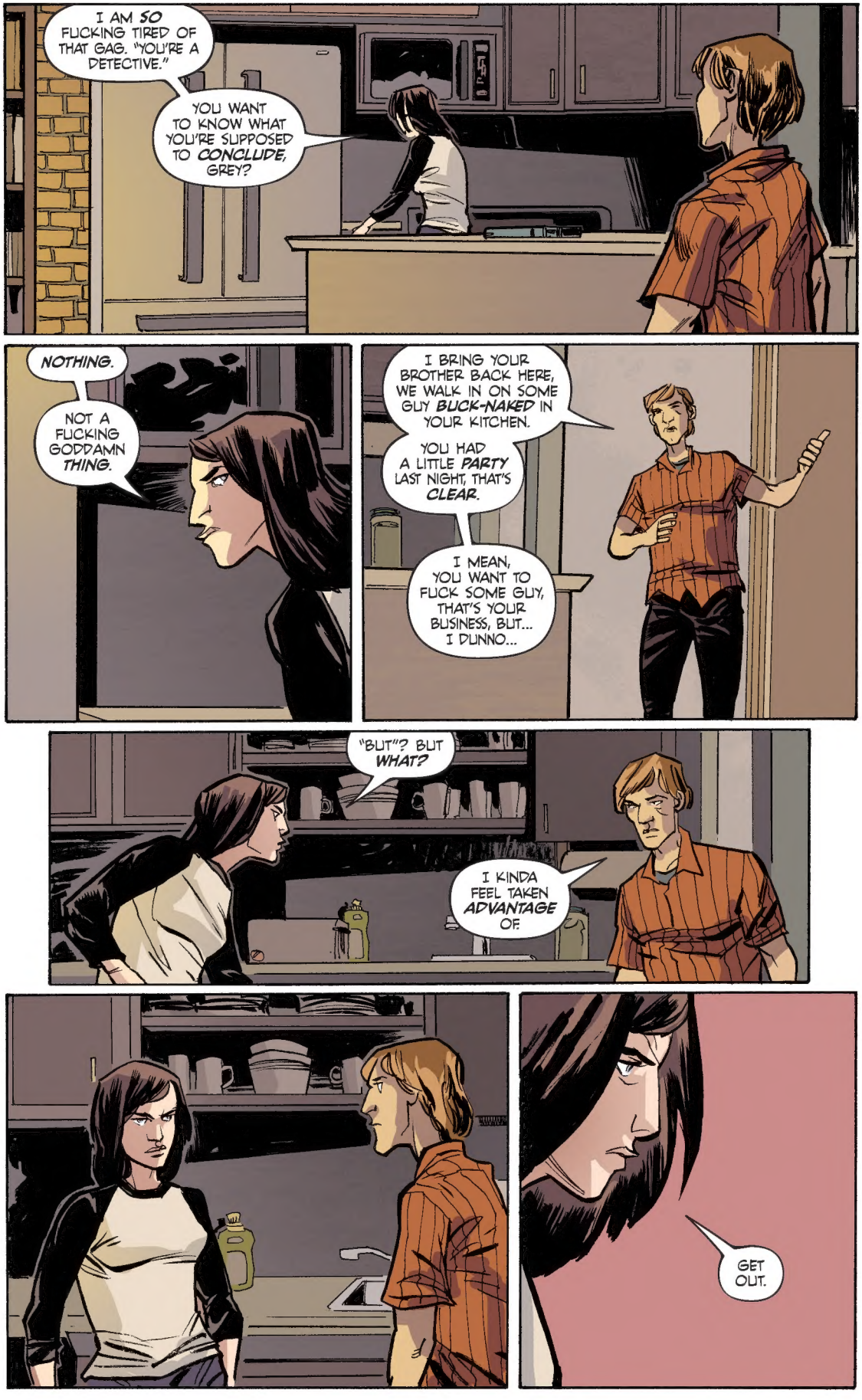

...THE HOT WATER TAP STICKS THOUGH, SO BE CAREFUL YOU DON'T SCALD...
...YOURSELF...
OH, THIS IS AWKWARD.
IN A WORD.
YOU, AH... YOU CAME BACK EARLY.
YEAH, I'VE GOT A SESSION STARTING AT TEN.
OH.

HE'S NAKED!
HE IS.
Y-YOU G-GUYS HAD SEX!
JIMMY.
TAKE THE TOWEL.
THANK YOU.
SO...
...YOU GOING TO INTRODUCE US?
WHY NOT?
GREY, THIS IS MR. JAMES BURKE...


JIMMY, THIS IS MR. GREY RUSTECO.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU, MATE.
YOU SAID "SESSION"? YOU'RE A DOCTOR?
I'M A MUSICIAN.
AND WHAT DO YOU DO, MR. BURKE?
HE PLAYS F-F-FOR THE TIMBERS!
I'M GOING TO TAKE THAT SHOWER, I THINK.
NICE TO MEET YOU, GREY.
YEAH, YOU TOO, JIMMY.

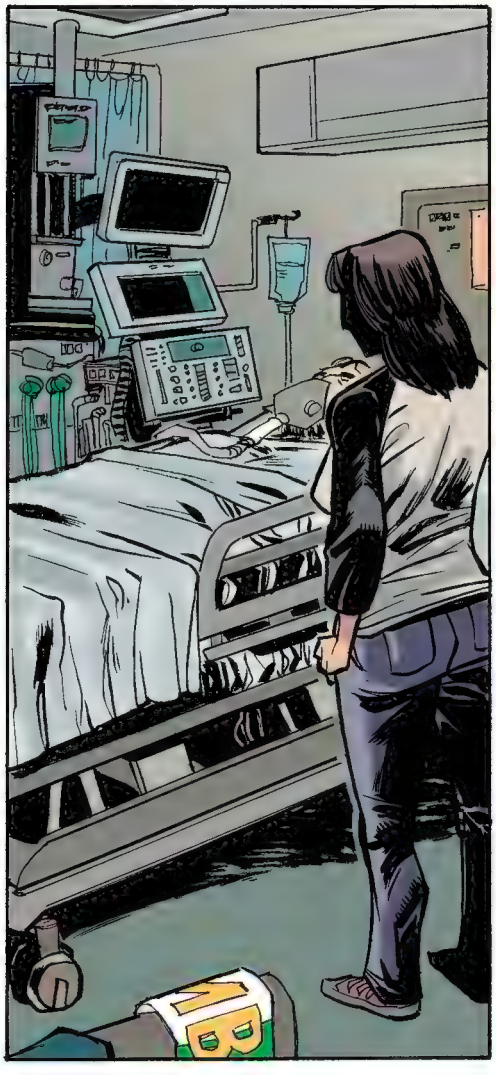
YOU SHOULD GET READY FOR WORK, ANSEL.
I'LL DRIVE YOU OVER.
OH-KAY.
SO HOW WAS YOUR NIGHT?
BANGED A PRO SOCCER PLAYER AND THEN DECIDED TO RE-ENACT A SCENE FROM THE DEER HUNTER?
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?

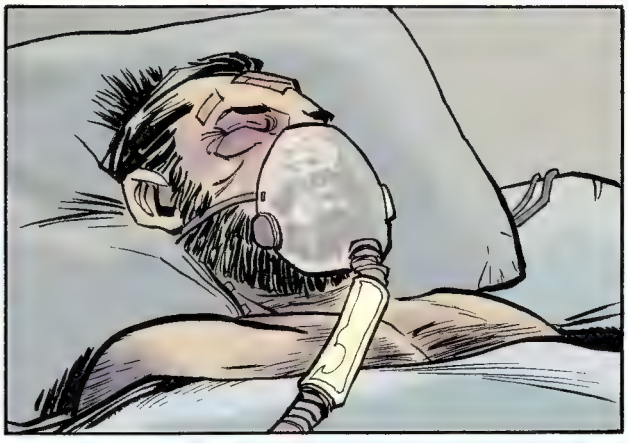
JUST LOOKS LIKE A HELLUVA *PARTY*...
...WONDERING IF YOU GOT ANY *SLEEP* AT ALL.
WHAT *IS* THIS?
SOMETHING *NOT* YOURS.
IT'S JUST A *QUESTION*.
REALLY? BECAUSE THERE'S A *FUCK-TON* OF *ACCUSATION* BEHIND IT.
I SEE A FUCKING *FIREARM* ON YOUR COFFEE TABLE AND EMPTY BOTTLES.
YOU'RE THE DETECTIVE, WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO *CONCLUDE?*

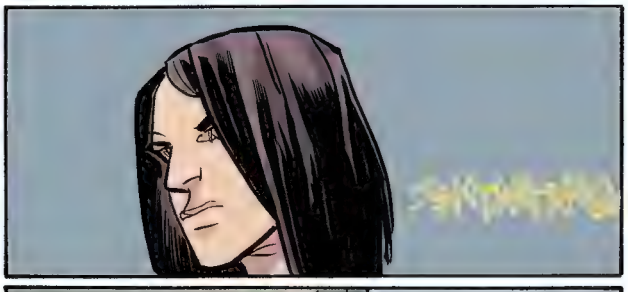

I AM SO FUCKING TIRED OF THAT GAG. "YOU'RE A DETECTIVE."
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO CONCLUDE, GREY?
NOTHING.
NOT A FUCKING GODDAMN THING.
I BRING YOUR BROTHER BACK HERE, WE WALK IN ON SOME GUY BUCK-NAKED IN YOUR KITCHEN.
YOU HAD A LITTLE PARTY LAST NIGHT, THAT'S CLEAR.
I MEAN, YOU WANT TO FUCK SOME GUY, THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS, BUT... I DUNNO...
"BUT"? BUT WHAT?
I KINDA FEEL TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF.
GET OUT.

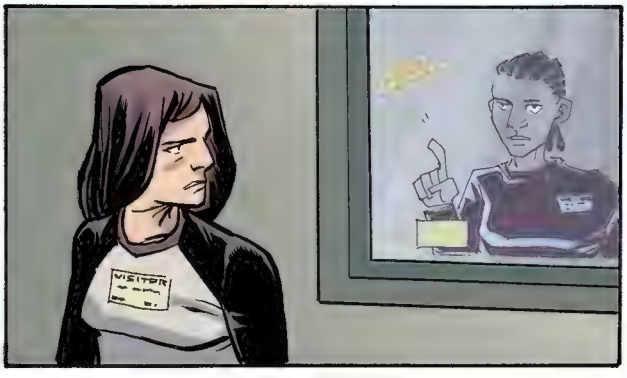
I'M GIGGING THIS WEEK, SO YOU KNOW.
SO I'M NOT GOING TO BE AVAILABLE FOR ANSEL, THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING.
I UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

OHSU








VISITOR

HOW'D YOU *FIND* ME?
PLEASE.
YOU WEREN'T AT YOUR *OFFICE*, YOU WEREN'T AT YOUR *HOME*, AND YOU'RE *NOT* ANSWERING YOUR *PHONE*.
PRETTY MUCH A *NO-BRAINER*.
WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT THIS, DEX.
THERE'S NOTHING TO TALK *ABOUT*.
WE KEEP SHAKING TREES, WE SEE WHAT WE FIND.
SOMEBODY KNOWS WHO PUT MERCURY IN THAT BED...
...WE'RE GOING TO *FIND* THEM.

WHAT'RE WE DOING?
GET IN THE CAR, CK.
THAT WAS OLD BEN. HE SHOWED UP THE NIGHT MERCURY GOT BEAT.
I WANT TO TALK TO HIM, AND I DON'T WANT TO DO IT HERE.
HALF THE DAMN TIMBERS ARMY SHOWED UP TO CHECK ON MERCURY.
THIS IS THIN AND YOU KNOW IT.
SOMETHING'S OFF WITH HIM. SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT.
YOU'RE FREE TO LEAVE WHENEVER YOU WANT...
...I'VE MORE THAN GOT THIS COVERED.

NO, YOU DON'T.
YES.
I DO.
BULLSHIT.
YOU'RE COMING APART SO FAST PEOPLE ARE GETTING HIT BY THE SHRAPNEL.
WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU KNOW, CK?
HUH? HUH?
WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU FUCKING KNOW?
YOU DON'T KNOW SHIT.

STRENGTH THROUGH INTELLIGENCE.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
"STRENGTH THROUGH INTELLIGENCE."
MOTTO OF THE 519TH.
OR AM I MISTAKEN.
CAPTAIN?
THAT SHIT'S OVER.
NOT THE WAY YOU'RE ACTING.
I'VE SEEN THESE SYMPTOMS BEFORE, DEX. YOU NEED TO GET HELP.

I DON'T NEED HELP--
--THERE HE IS.
PLAYING ONE HELL OF A HUNCH.
WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME...

SO, HOW LONG WERE YOU *IN?*

DROP IT, CK.

...WHICH I GUESS MEANS YOU WENT FROM USMA TO FORT HUACHUCA, I'M THINKING STRAIGHT AWAY, RIGHT?

THAT'D BE THE BASIC OFFICER'S TRAINING COURSE...

...WHICH MEANS YOU WERE IN FOR A ***WHILE,*** WITH MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS.

WOULD MAYBE PUT YOU IN IRAQ DURING THE ***SURGE,*** AND THEN AFGHANISTAN, TOO...

...OF COURSE, IT'S ***INTELLIGENCE,*** SO ALL THAT SHIT'S GOTTA BE ***CLASSIFIED...***

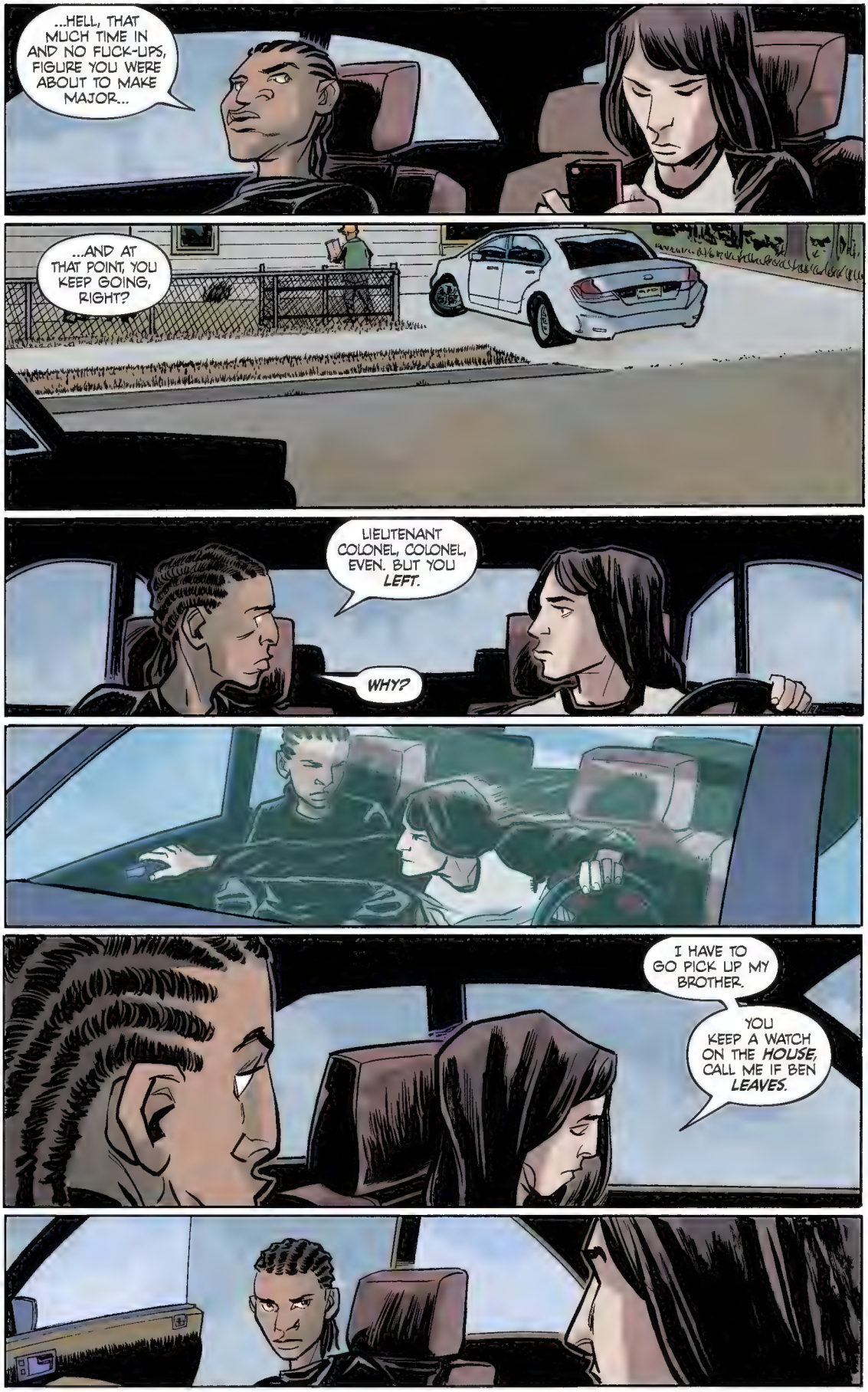
UNITED STAT

...NOW YOU ASK ME, ***THAT*** MAKES MORE SENSE, RIGHT?

NOT THAT ELECTRONIC SHIT, BUT ALL HUMINT. THAT WOULD TRACK WITH YOU BECOMING A P.I. WHEN YOU GOT ***OUT...***

...BEGS THE QUESTION WHY YOU ***LEFT.***

YOU WERE ***CAREER*** MILITARY, YOU'RE A CAPTAIN...

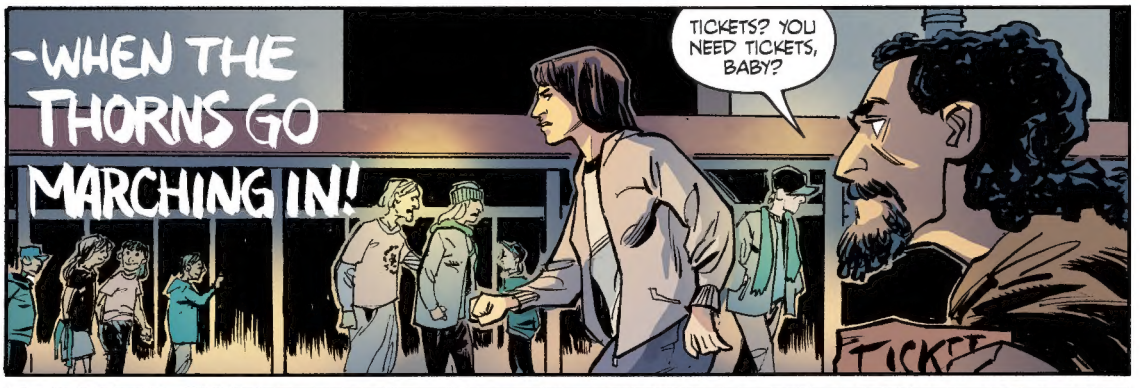

...HELL, THAT MUCH TIME IN AND NO FUCK-UPS, FIGURE YOU WERE ABOUT TO MAKE MAJOR...
...AND AT THAT POINT, YOU KEEP GOING, RIGHT?
LIEUTENANT COLONEL, COLONEL, EVEN. BUT YOU *LEFT*.
WHY?
I HAVE TO GO PICK UP MY BROTHER.
YOU KEEP A WATCH ON THE *HOUSE*, CALL ME IF BEN *LEAVES*.

YOU'RE DITCHING ME, I'M GONNA FIND YOU AND KICK YOUR ASS SO HARD YOU'LL BE TASTING SHOE LEATHER.
YOU'LL TRY.
DON'T LOSE HIM.
I TRACKED YOU DOWN, DIDN'T I?
WHY'D YOU LEAVE, PARIOS?
WHY'D YOU LEAVE?

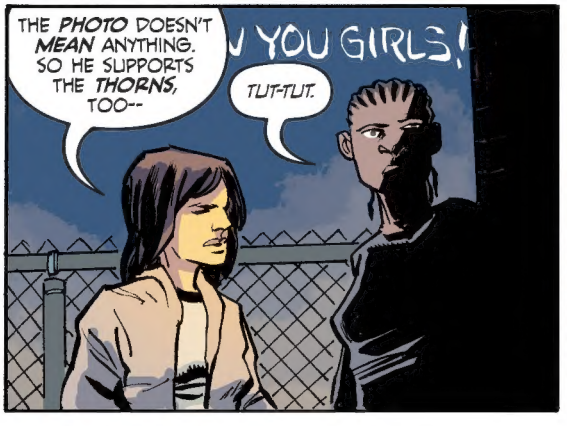
...AND THERE'S COLD CHICKEN IN THE FRIDGE, OKAY?
YOU CAN HAVE ONE--AND I MEAN *ONE*--OF THE DIET SODAS, BUT THAT'S *IT*.
I'LL BE BACK AS SOON AS I CAN, BUT IT MIGHT BE LATE.
TRY TO BE IN BED BY MIDNIGHT IF I'M NOT BACK.
W-WH-WHEN'S *GREY* COMING OVER?
HE'S BUSY TONIGHT. YOU CAN TOTALLY HANDLE THIS, ANSEL.
B-B... B-BUT I WANT SOME-SOME*ONE* TO STAY WITH ME.
I HAVE TO GO OUT.
DON'T WANNA BE A-A-ALONE.

ANSEL, PLEASE. I KNOW IT'S NOT WHAT YOU'RE USED TO--
♪DA-DA-DA-DUM-DA-DA-DUM-DA-DA♪
♪DA-DA-DA-DUM--♪
--BUT I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE, HERE.
♪--DA-DA-DUM--♪
GO.
I'M TEXTING YOU A PHOTO.
YOU'RE GONNA WANT TO MEET ME UP AT THE PARK.
THE PARK? WHICH PARK ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, CK?
LOOK AT THE PICTURE, PARIOS.
TRUST ME, YOU'LL KNOW.

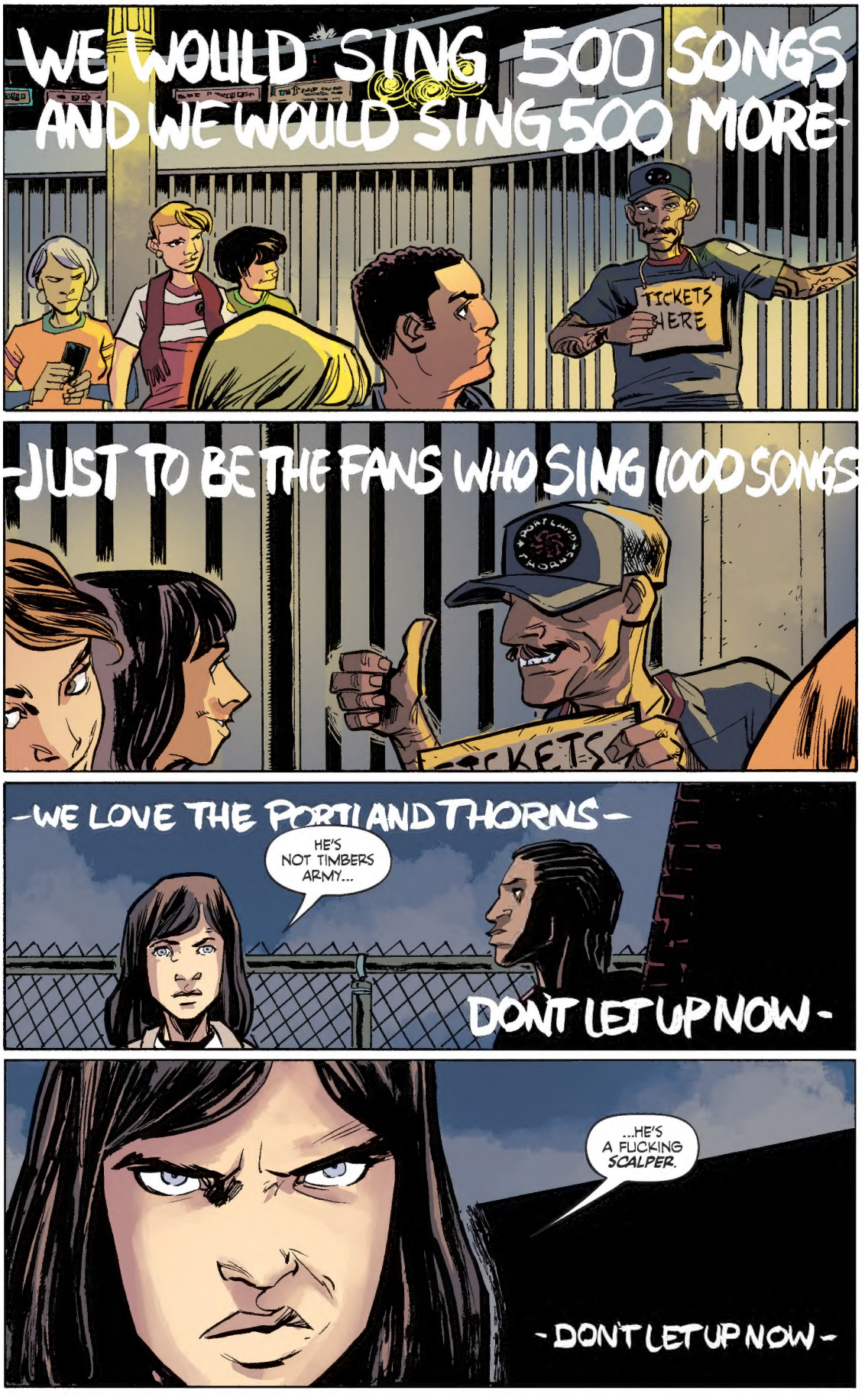
PROVIDENCE PARK
OH WHEN THE THORNS! GO MARCHING IN!
OH WHEN THE THORNS GO MARCHING IN!
HOW I WANT TO BE IN ROSE CITY -

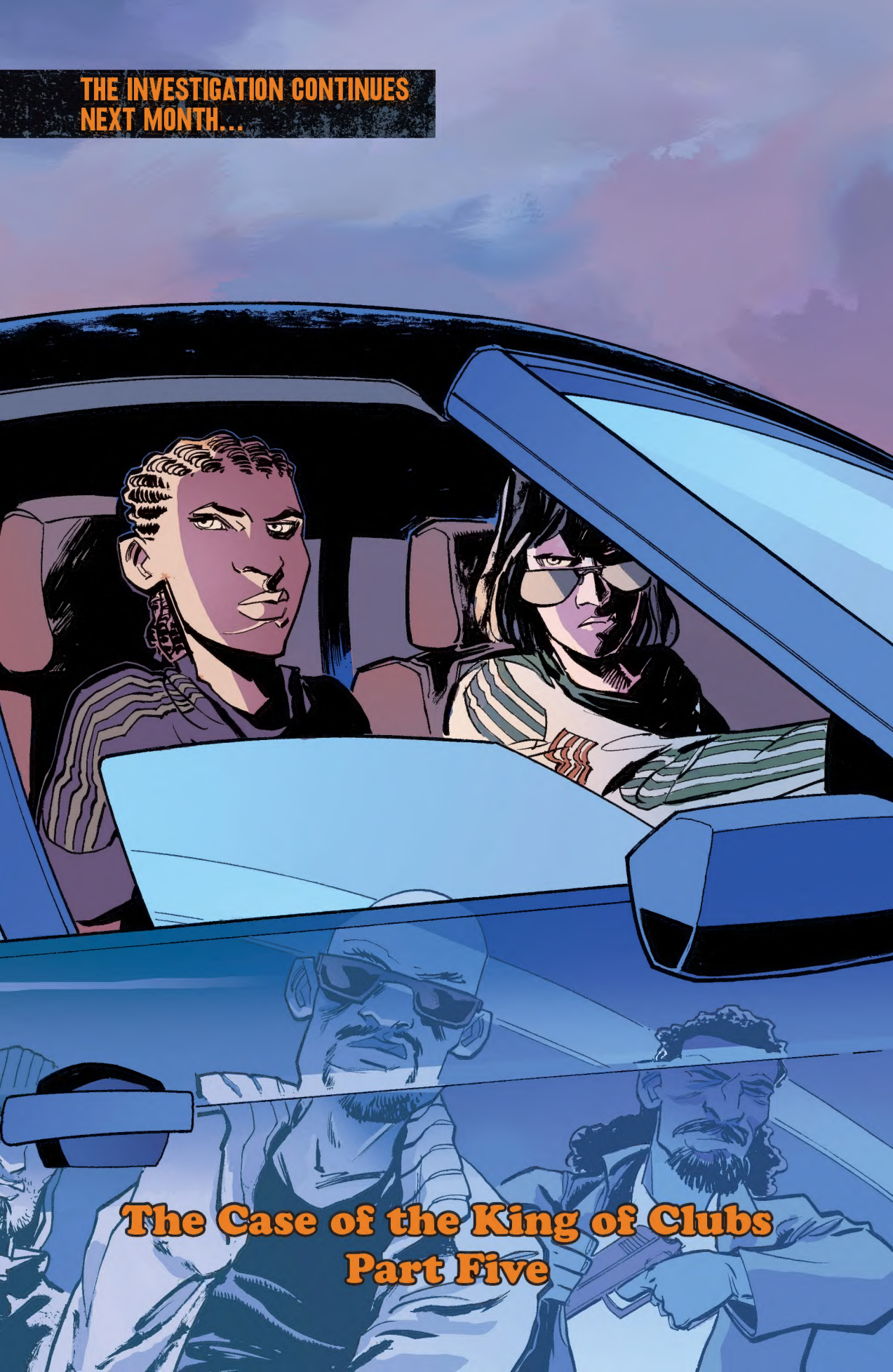

-WHEN THE THORNS GO MARCHING IN!
TICKETS? YOU NEED TICKETS, BABY?

COME ON YOU GIRLS IN RED!
COME ON YOU GIRLS IN RED!


THE PHOTO DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING. SO HE SUPPORTS THE THORNS, TOO--
TUT-TUT.

COME ON YOU GIRLS IN RED!
OVER THERE.


WE WOULD SING 500 SONGS AND WE WOULD SING 500 MORE-
TICKETS HERE
-JUST TO BE THE FANS WHO SING 1000 SONGS
-WE LOVE THE PORTLAND THORNS-
HE'S NOT TIMBERS ARMY...
DON'T LET UP NOW-
...HE'S A FUCKING SCALPER.
-DON'T LET UP NOW-


THE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES
NEXT MONTH...
The Case of the King of Clubs
Part Five

VEE EMPIRE